

REMARKS

Claims 18-21 are presented for consideration, with Claims 18 being independent.

Independent Claim 18 has been amended to further distinguish Applicants' invention from the cited art. Support for the amendment to Claim 18 can be found, for example, on page 11, line 23, *et. seq.*, of the specification and in Figures 8-10.

The amendment to Claim 18 was not presented earlier as it was believed that the previously presented claims would be found allowable. This Amendment does not add any additional claims. Moreover, the Examiner's familiarity with the subject matter of the present application will allow an appreciation of the significance of the amendments herein without undue expenditure of time and effort. Finally, the Amendment does not raise new issues requiring further consideration or search. Accordingly, it is submitted that consideration and entry of the Amendment is appropriate.

Claims 18-21 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as allegedly being obvious over Fukumoto '146 in view of Wugoski '392 and Bertram '546. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 18 of Applicants' invention relates to a function assignment method for function keys of an operation device, and comprises sequentially the steps of displaying a first prescribed hierarchical level menu comprising a plurality of prescribed items, selecting by a user one of the prescribed items, displaying, on a same screen with the prescribed hierarchical level menu, a lower hierarchical level menu according to the selected item among the prescribed items, with the lower hierarchical level menu comprising a plurality of lower items, and selecting by the

user one of the lower items. Additional steps include displaying, on the same screen with the prescribed and lower hierarchical level menu, a registration menu comprising registration items relating to the function keys, according to selection of one of items in the lower hierarchical level menu, selecting by a user one of the registration items, and assigning a function according to a set of the selected items in each hierarchical level menu to the function key relating to the selected registration item with one-to-one correspondence.

In accordance with Applicants' claimed invention, an easy to operate and effective method for assignment a function to function keys of an operation device is provided.

As discussed in the previous Amendment of October 1, 2007, the primary citation to Fukumoto relates to a customized menu system design to allow a user to select an adjustable item with a small number of menu operations. In relying on Fukumoto, the Office Action asserts a teaching of displaying a prescribed hierarchical level menu with prescribed items (Figure 5), and displaying, on the same screen as the prescribed hierarchical level menu, a lower hierarchical level menu comprising lower items (Figures 7A-7C). In an apparent conflict with the assertion regarding Figures 7A-7C, however, the Office Action also states that Fukumoto fails to disclose the lower hierarchical level menu is displayed on the same screen with the prescribed hierarchical level menu (see page 3, last paragraph of Office Action).

The secondary citation to Wugoski is directed to a user interface system and is cited for presenting a user with a registration menu comprising items that relate to function keys, after the user has inputted a desired series of inputs to define a function.

The Bertram patent relates to a programming structure and is relied upon for displaying hierarchical level menus in a cascading fashion with first and second hierarchical level menus being displayed on the same screen.

Even assuming, *arguendo*, the art could have been combined in the manner proposed in the Office Action, it is submitted that such a combination still fails to teach or suggest Applicants' claimed invention. For example, the proposed combination of art does not teach or suggest sequentially displaying a prescribed hierarchical level menu and displaying, on the same screen, a lower hierarchical level menu and a registration menu of registration items relating to the function keys based on a selected one of items from the lower hierarchical level menu. In this regard, Fukumoto is read to display a single hierarchical menu on a screen shown in Figure 5, and the display screens in Figures 7A-7C are read to show only the lowest hierarchical level menu, i.e., a table of adjustable items, with a menu of customizable items. In Bertram, there is no teaching or suggestion of assigning a function to a set of the selected items in each hierarchical level menu to a function key, a feature also missing in Fukumoto and Wugosky.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. §103 is deemed to be in order and such action is respectfully requested.

Thus, it is submitted that Applicants' invention as set forth in independent Claim 18 is patentable over the cited art. In addition, dependent Claims 19-21 set forth additional features of Applicants' invention. Independent consideration of the dependent claims is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of this application is deemed to be in order and such action is respectfully requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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